

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

5 A system and method of generating an ordered search list via a pay-
for-performance search engine by determining various account balances to
determine if a search listing is given preferential placement in a search list. If
a web site advertiser's account is below a threshold, for example zero dollars,
the search listing associated with the advertiser is not given preferential
placement in a search list regardless of the advertiser bid amount for that
search listing. Various balances may be used. Some of the balances may be
closer to real-time balances and other may be more accurate, for example by
10 removing click charges that were later determined to be non-chargeable. By
using the various account balances, the pay-for-performance search engine
prevents over-delivery of preferential placement and possible over-billing of
the advertisers.
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